



University of Colorado

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## President Bruce Benson's newsletter <sup>[1]</sup>

### A Message from the President

#### May 2017

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Later this week we begin one of my favorite times of year at the university ? commencement season. I have attended about 65 CU graduation ceremonies (not counting my own, in 1964) on our four campuses since becoming president more than nine years ago, and I never tire of it.

Commencement is the culmination of years of hard work for our graduates. It?s wonderful to be able to share the joyous day with them, their families and friends. It?s also a beginning, when graduates embark on new chapters in their lives and put their CU educations to work.

I received a great letter recently from a mother of a young woman who will graduate Friday. The subject line on her email was ?CU, The Experience of a Lifetime.? She detailed her daughter?s journey, from her nervousness about considering an out-of-state school to the significant transition of her freshman year and all the way up through her pending graduation. One line in particular stuck out at me: ?The experience has been extraordinary; the personal and academic growth that has taken place has been astonishing.? Those lines are true for many graduates.

Before we attend the ceremonies on each of our four campuses, I try to learn more about individual stories from some of our graduates. There are thousands, as you can imagine, but I offer some snapshots.

There?s Katy Hartshorn, who will earn a bachelor?s degree in communication from our Colorado Springs campus after a long and winding journey. She started at UCCS in 1996, but juggling motherhood, work and school became overwhelming and she had to withdraw. She returned in 2000, only to have work demands once again sidetrack her. She returned in 2002, but needed to leave again in 2004. When her son started college in 2015, she returned again and the fourth time proved a charm. She?ll graduate with a 3.8 grade-point-average and her son, now a UCCS sophomore, will be there Friday to cheer her on.

Adam McHenry <sup>[2]</sup> isn?t waiting until after the graduation ceremony to get started on his

career. He will graduate next week from the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences on the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. Throughout his academic career, he successfully competed in national competitions relating to a process that produces personalized medications for patients, known as compounding. McHenry is launching a compounding company and has already broken ground on a facility in Parker.

Nadeen Ibrahim [2] will receive her bachelor's degree in public health next week from CU Denver, and her accomplishments are substantial. The daughter of immigrants, she grew up in the small Colorado town of Wiggins, Colorado, but has thrived in the urban setting of the Denver campus. She has become a powerful advocate for helping people overcome differences and managing diversity. Gov. John Hickenlooper appointed her to the board that oversees the state Department of Public Health and Environment, and she is its youngest member. Nadeen, who we featured in a video [3], is heading to the University of Oxford in England to pursue a master's in public policy.

Michael Persinger [4] will graduate from CU Boulder with a degree in integrative physiology. He credits his father, an orphan who spent some difficult years in foster care but went on to a successful military career, with instilling in him a strong work ethic and the ability to persevere. Those traits allowed Michael to juggle a challenging course load and several part-time jobs on his way to a degree. He also found time to volunteer at Longmont United Hospital and the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless. After graduation, he is considering medical school connected with the nation's armed services.

There are thousands more CU success stories that we will learn about at commencement ceremonies in the coming weeks. The ceremonies are rightfully about our graduates and their families and friends, but they also provide those of us who work at CU with a shining reminder of why we are here.

For feedback, contact [officeofthepresident@cu.edu](mailto:officeofthepresident@cu.edu) [5]

Sincerely,



Bruce Benson  
President

**To receive President Benson's monthly newsletter, email us at [contact@cu.edu](mailto:contact@cu.edu) [6].**

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